



**POLICY IN PLACE:  
MODELS FOR FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL-  
MUNICIPAL COLLABORATION**

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# THEMES

## New Era of Tri-lateral Policy in Federalism?

1. Why: Place Matters
2. What: Federal/Provincial/Municipal Policy Collaboration
3. Where: Site-specific and Sector-oriented
4. How: Place-based Federalism
5. When: Building Back Better

# PLACE MATTERS

COVID-19 crisis starkly reveals place-based realities:

- 1. Spatialized Twin Crisis:** Disproportionate health and economic impacts in urban neighbourhoods where inequities of race, class, services intersect (“neighbourhoods with the wrong kind of density”)
- 2. Significance of Municipalities:** As partners implementing/enforcing regulations and as community-based innovators
- 3. Dysfunctionalities in Federalism:** Front-line governments without sufficient voice, revenues, tools to meet responsibilities/expectations in complex policy fields

# PUBLIC POLICY IMPLICATIONS

International Policy Authorities taking stock:

**UN-HABITAT:** *“Coordination between the national, subnational and local governments is the first step of an effective response.”*

**World Economic Forum:** *“Cities will survive – and with the right multi-stakeholder leadership and strategic planning, they will thrive. This will require collaboration between businesses, governments and civil society to meet the ongoing challenges of COVID-19 crisis and planning in post-pandemic world.”*

**OECD:** *“Managing COVID-19 differentiated impact requires a degree of flexibility to allow for territorial responses that are place-based and adapted to the most pressing needs and preparedness of specific localities ... introduce, activate or reorient existing multi-level coordination bodies in order to minimize the risk of a fragmented response.”*

What about Canada ....

# HIGHLY URBANIZED, DECENTRALIZED AND ... DISCONNECTED?

COVID-19 opening Collaborative Policy Window

- **Federal Fall Economic Statement:** “Collaboration between different orders of government has been a keystone of Canada’s approach.”
- **City of Toronto:** “Moving beyond pre-pandemic ways of working, in greater collaboration.”
- **Mayor of Victoria:** “A new way of working together, deepening collaboration and we won’t be able to turn back.”
- **Inter-governmental Odd Couple:** Ford-Freeland “We are all communicating constantly. I mean constantly.”

Upshot? Window opening but how to jump through?

# *POLICY IN PLACE: REVISITING CANADA'S TRI-LEVEL AGREEMENTS*

Profiles of five agreements/models over four decades:

1. Site-specific (vulnerable neighbourhoods) and Sector-oriented (wicked problems)
2. Origins, Governance, Projects, Achievements
3. Framework for “Place-based Federalism”
4. Six Principles of Tri-lateral Policy Practice

# SITE-SPECIFIC TRI-LATERALISM

## URBAN DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENTS:

**Winnipeg (4) 1981-2009, Vancouver (2) 2000-2010,  
Victoria/Edmonton 2004-05, and almost Toronto 2005**

- **Origins:** Municipal/Community push with Federal RDA champion
- **Scale:** Targeted inner-city neighbourhoods in metro-wide governance/policy vision
- **Coordination:** Nested federal, provincial, municipal political, administrative, operational committees with small secretariat and store-front presence
- **Funding:** Winnipeg – large scale, equal contributions, private sector partnerships for infrastructure investments; Vancouver – modest scale, weighted contributions, private sector contributions for pilot projects
- **Implementation:** Tri-lateral sign-off; government-community task teams; clear jurisdictional leads on place-specific priorities

# SITE-SPECIFIC MODEL: UDA VANCOUVER

## VANCOUVER AGREEMENT STRUCTURE





# SECTOR-ORIENTED TRI-LATERALISM

## COMPLEX POLICY COLLABORATIONS 2000-2020:

### Homelessness, Immigrant Settlement, Gas Tax Fund

- **Origins:** Municipal/Community push with Federal Ministerial champions by sector (e.g. Claudette Bradshaw, John Godfrey)
- **Scale:** Pan-Canadian coverage of multiple “cities and communities”
- **Coordination:** Devolved federal-local partnerships with provincial engagement on municipal/community plans, role for municipal associations
- **Funding:** Federal funding of partnerships/projects with variable provincial/municipal contributions
- **Implementation:** Municipal-community action plans aligned with federal inclusion/sustainability objectives and provincial support

# SECTOR-ORIENTED MODEL: IMMIGRANT SETTLEMENT LONDON



# FIVE LESSONS (PROMISING)

- 1. Alignment:** “Vertical and Horizontal” e.g. Vancouver – 44 government agencies; Winnipeg – 30 programs, 1 000 projects
- 2. Bottom-Up:** E.g. Vancouver’s Four Pillars Coalition and Integrated Neighbourhood Team
- 3. Holistic:** Physical *and* social, place *and* people – “Revitalization without Displacement”
- 4. Accountability:** Five-year cycles with renewals tied to evaluations and community feedback
- 5. Spin-offs:** E.g. Winnipeg’s Development Corporations and Neighbourhood Centres; Vancouver’s Safe Injection Site and Community Benefit Agreements

# FIVE LESSONS (PROBLEMATIC)

- 1. Community:** Inconsistent engagement, limited in agreement governance, stronger in project implementation
- 2. Political:** Key initial champions but government change at any level means uncertainty (e.g. end UDAs in 2006, yet start LIPs, expand HPS, embed GTF)
- 3. Administration:** Incentives to collaborate “down the line”, central agency support, so not “managing off-side-of-the desk”
- 4. Funding:** Sufficient to drive transformation and avoid unfunded local mandates?
- 5. Scaling-up:** Site and sector remain “parallel tracks”, how to translate pilots into policy and transfer knowledge/practices?

# NOT A POLICY PANACEA BUT VALUABLE ADDITION TO THE TOOL-KIT

## Reflection from official in Winnipeg UDAs

1. *“Breadth of issues determines that no single level of government has the capacity to individually succeed.”*
2. *“Therefore the three levels of government have seen the benefit of government pooling resources.”*
3. *“Not perfect and not always in lock step, but these relationships certainly beat the alternative.”*

Doug Kalciscs: “Lessons from the West for Toronto,” UDA Forum, 2004.

# SIDEBAR: TORONTO'S STRONG NEIGHBOURHOOD TASK FORCE

**Notable tri-lateralism: Research, convening, reporting 2004-05**

**GT United Way/City of Toronto with Federal/Provincial support**

- Ground breaking: *Poverty by Postal Code* on inner suburbs, *Cracks in the Foundation* on service gaps
- Ground breaking: “Tri-lateral Agreement for City of Toronto with Inter-Governmental Table” to implement subsidiary agreements

Recommendation One: *“The three orders of government enter into a five-year renewable agreement to implement the Toronto Strong Neighbourhoods Strategy, and commit senior elected representatives to establish the Inter-Governmental Table as the first action”*

Agreement negotiated in December 2005 – “First Focus: Regent Park Revitalization” but never implemented

# TOWARDS PLACE-BASED FEDERALISM

It has (often) been said ...

about vulnerable neighbourhoods

*“Canada needs to catch up with other countries on issues of place”  
(Harcourt Committee 2006)*

about complex files

*Canadian Federalism “in dire need of new ideas” (Professor Carey  
Doberstein 2012)*

about tri-lateral agreements

*Canada’s “case-by-case approach lacks a coherent, integrated body of  
policies and guidance to design governance and management  
arrangements” (Auditor General of Canada 2005)*

# TOWARDS PLACE-BASED FEDERALISM

40 years of tri-lateral policy experience into ...

## **Canadian Inter-governmental Table for Tri-lateral Policy**

- Establish criteria for entering and protocols for negotiating
- Identify viable site/sector agreements
- Designate government leads, clarify “tri-lateral division of labour”
- Ensure community/neighbourhood input and involvement
- Evaluate results, policy transfer, foresight intelligence

*If “place matters more” then supplement existing bi-lateral (cooperative) or unilateral (open) federalism with tri-lateral place-based pathway*



# BUILDING BACK BETTER: TWO TRI-LATERAL OPPORTUNITIES

- **COVID-19 Twin Crisis in Vulnerable Neighbourhoods**

Disproportionate health and economic impacts in similar places across Canadian cities; racialized communities historically underserved, in urgent need of large-scale, long-term, targeted investments

Municipal/community networks “in place” with multi-faceted agendas

- **Climate Change Crisis on Municipal Front Lines**

Municipalities as *sites* of weather events, GHG emissions, waste management, greenspace and watersheds and spaces where green infrastructure, environmental regulation, sustainable planning intersect

Municipal/community sustainability plans “in place” with targets

# COLLABORATIVE POLICY WINDOWS?

Build Back Better programs rolling out with varying “leads” where tri-lateral coordination could help

1. **Federal:** Regional Relief Recovery Funds (\$2 billion through 6 RDAs)
2. **Provincial:** Stronger BC Community Economic Recovery Infrastructure Program (\$90 million for community economic resilience, tourism, heritage, and urban and rural economic development projects)
3. **Business:** RBC with provincial/municipal chambers of commerce – Canada United Small Business Relief Fund (\$14 million federal contribution)
4. **Community:** Social Innovations transitioning in-person programs online for community empowerment (*Imagine Canada* inventory)

# IN A NUTSHELL ..

## ***Policy in Place* “Six Principles of Tri-lateral Practice”**

- 1. Clarify mission:** Collaboration *is* the missing ingredient
- 2. Conduct readiness test:** Champions and capacity
- 3. Take intelligent risks:** Join-up for the hardest problems
- 4. Scale innovations:** Pilots/demonstrations into policy
- 5. Plan for transitions:** Spin-offs, no unfunded mandates
- 6. Forge learning networks:** Capture what works where